

THE THEATRICAL MANAGERS FAVOR A STANDING ARMY

Shaw Serves as Two Masters in Theatre

"Major Barbara" Is Example to Aspiring Dramatists of What to Do and What Not to Do in the Business of Making a Play.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

Kipling's friend Mulvaney was such a good soldier when he was sober and such a bad one when he was drunk that he was used to instruct the young recruits by direct and rictorial fire.

Shaw is just such another example to dramatists. Of course, socialistic or vegetarianistic will have to be substituted for drunk, but that is merely a detail. To see "Major Barbara" is to see everything that should be done and everything that should not be done on the stage. It is almost incredible that the same person should have written the scene between Barbara and Bill in the second act and the rather tiresome dialogue between Undershaft and Cusins which follows it.

Certainly it is much more interesting to see the Salvation Army at work than to hear Cusins and Undershaft talking about it, even though their talk is at times brilliant. It seems ridiculous to set two men to discussing the power which Barbara wields and her methods when the audience has just seen her at work upon the soul of Bill, and is quite prepared to judge for itself as to the questions at issue. Naturally the audience will be much more interested in putting its own impressions into shape than in paying any particular attention to what others may have to say about Barbara.

There is, however, no attempt in trying to set rules for a dramatist like Shaw. He cap rip through them with his typewriter as a German armored auto might go through a barbed wire fence. Bits of the broken law or method may cling, but there's no stopping him. For instance, it may fairly be set down that dramatists of to-day should, to the best of their ability, avoid long speeches. But Shaw folk never miss an opening to talk at great length, and so eloquent is their conversation that nobody has the heart to cry halt.

Take the reply of Andrew Undershaft when he is asked "What on earth is the true faith of an armorer?" Undershaft was probably clever enough to answer that question in fifty words, but Shaw was eloquent enough to answer it in five hundred, which is much more difficult. If you have a little Crucible or Bethlehem or Baldwin in your home you may be interested to listen to Andrew. Even if you haven't you probably will. Undershaft replies:

"To give arms to all men who offer an honest price for them, without respect of persons or principles; to aristocrat and republican, to nihilist and Teuton, to capitalist and Socialist, to Protestant and Catholic, to burglar and policeman, to black man, white man and yellow man, to all sorts and conditions, all nationalities, all faiths, all follies, all causes and all crimes. The first Undershaft wrote up in his shop 'If God gave the hand, let not man withhold the sword.' The second wrote up 'All have the right to fight; none have the right to judge.' The third wrote up 'To man the weapon; to Heaven the victory.' The fourth had no literary turn; so he did not write up anything; but he sold cannons to Napoleon under the nose of George the Third. The fifth wrote up 'Peace shall not prevail save with a sword in her hand.' The sixth, my master, was the best of all. He wrote up 'Nothing is ever done in this world until men are prepared to kill one another if it is not done.' After that, there was nothing left for the seventh to say. So he wrote up, simply, 'Unashamed.'"

Now, that speech is much too long for ordinary dramatic purposes, and yet we will guarantee that nobody will write in his seat or yawn while it is being spoken. In fact, if he bought Crucible at 105, say, it may serve to still those conscientious scruples which have been bothering him.

The main thing with rules for play-writing, Shaw and all the rest of it, may be summed up in the proverb: "Be sure you're going ahead and then never mind whether you're right or wrong."

Every big man has some particular foible. Shaw likes to write dialect. In fact, in "Pygmalion" he devoted a whole play to dialect. He fancies that he can reproduce phonetically the lingo of the London cockney, and Conway Tearle, as Bill Walker, has such speeches set for him as "Of course, if Mr. Teatle pronounced those words as they are written not a soul in the theatre nor anywhere else would understand what he was talking about. He even thought it might be excellent dialect, it would be a mighty bad line for a play. Fortunately Mr. Tearle plays Bill Walker almost straight. There is a suggestion of the cockney talk, but nothing more, and, as a matter of fact, his very best moments are those in which he has altogether forgotten that he is supposed to be wrestling with a tongue-tie lingo.

We don't know much about fashions, but we do know what we like. We have been dazzled by the gorgeous gowns of "Around the Map" and astounded by the costumes of "The Midnight Frolic," but the two most fetching pictures of the season in our mind are Martha Hedman in a nurse's gown and Grace George in the garb of the Salvation Army.

"YOUNG AMERICA" AT THE STANDARD

Jasper Back in Town—"Omar" at the Lexington.

"Young America," which has been able to stay from New York only two weeks, will be on view at the Standard Theatre to-morrow evening. "Young America" is an optimistic comedy of youth by Fred Ballard, containing a great deal that the younger generation will enjoy, and even more that the grown-up will like.

The original Gaiety Theatre cast, including Jasper, the thinking dog, will be on hand for the engagement at the Standard. These include Otto Kruger, Percy Helton, Benny Sweeney, Charles Drew Clark, William Sampson, Forrest Robinson, Sam Coit, Peggy Wood and Adella Barker.

"Omar, the Tentmaker," which has had a long and prosperous road tour since leaving Broadway, will be this week's attraction at the Lexington. Guy Bates Post is still starring in the role. Since it left New York two seasons ago "Omar" has played constantly, with the single exception of four vacation weeks in San Francisco last summer. Next season, according to the present plans, Mr. Post will appear in a new play by Richard Walton Tully, author of "Omar."

D. W. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation" (film) will begin an engagement of two weeks at the Bronx Opera House to-morrow evening. This is the first opportunity given New Yorkers to see this picture at popular prices.

REICHER'S COMPANY IN "THE WEAVERS"

First Time in English for Hauptmann Drama.

"The Weavers," a five-act drama by Gerhart Hauptmann, will be given its first production in English by Emanuel Reicher at the Garden Theatre on Tuesday evening. The play will require the full membership of Mr. Reicher's company of fifty, in addition to the services of many players specially engaged.

There is no hero in "The Weavers," unless a community can be so regarded. It pictures the lives of the weavers of Silesia, Germany, during the early 40's, when they were making their fight for social justice. For this reason the author had great trouble in securing permission for the play's presentation in Germany. The first performance occurred in Berlin in 1890, and Mr. Reicher then created the role of Old Ansgar, which he will again play on Tuesday.

It is interesting to note, incidentally, that Old Baumer was played by Max Reinhardt, now the world-famous producer. In Mr. Reicher's production this role will be in the hands of Adolph Link, who has played it many times in Germany. The drama has been played in Germany in the United States and has also been translated into French and presented in Paris.

Among those who will support Mr. Reicher are Rupert Harvey, Maurice Cass, Mortimer Martin, Robert H. Barratt, John S. O'Brien, Erskine Sanford, Kraft Walton, Arvid Paulson, John Hines, Bertha Mann, Albert Gallatin, Kirsh Markham and Grace Harris.

The play will be presented for four weeks, and performances will be given every evening except Mondays, with Saturday matinees.

EIGHT PLAYS AT PRINCESS

Special Matinees for Benefit of French Red Cross.

Beginning next Tuesday afternoon, a season of opera comique will be played at the Princess Theatre, the proceeds to go to various French Red Cross hospitals. Eight short musical comedies will be presented, two on each of four afternoons. Several of the pieces have never before been seen in New York.

Performances will be given on the afternoons of December 14 and 28, and January 13 and 27. The following will be given: "Mam'zelle Mariette," by Emile Bourgeois; "Bruderlein Fein," by Leo Fall; "Pierrot Puni," by Henri Clément; "La Poupée de Nuremberg," by Her Brother, by Mary Helen Brown; "Le Jardinier," by Einar Linden; "Les Deux Pierrots," by Jean Hubert, and "L'Organiste," by J. B. Wekerlin.

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Beverly Sills in "The Great Lover," Longacre. Sylvia de France and Elsie Alder in "Around the Map," New Amsterdam.

IBSEN COMEDY IN GERMAN

"Ein Volksfeind" Will Be Presented Wednesday Evening.

Ibsen's "Ein Volksfeind" ("An Enemy of Society"), regarded as one of the Norwegian's most brilliant plays, will be given its first presentation in New York at the German Irving Place Theatre Wednesday evening. "Ein Volksfeind" follows the six weeks' run of "Hohet Tanz Walzer," Leo Ascher's Viennese operetta.

Richard Feist has staged "Ein Volksfeind," and will play Dr. Stockman. Others in the cast will be Grete Meyer, Aranka Eben, Ilse Engel, Helene Frey, Ernst Holmberg, Hans Unterkircher, Ludwig Koppe, Willy Frey, Ernst Robert, Otto Meyer, Gustav Paul Schuetz, Carl Manthey, Heinrich Falk and Eugen Keller.

"THE BLUE BIRD" RETURNS

Will Play Special Matinees at Manhattan Opera House.

Maurice Maeterlinck's "Blue Bird" is back in town for a special holiday engagement of two weeks, which will be played at the Manhattan Opera House. Daily matinees at 3 p. m. will be played and Saturday performances at 2:30. There will be no evening performances.

"The Blue Bird" is in its fifth year, and the present organization has presented the play upwards of 1,000 times. This will be New York's last opportunity to see the play for several years, as a long Australian tour is in prospect.

Old Films and New Seen On the Screens This Week

Henry Woodruff, famous as a matinee idol, will be on the Triangle bill at the Knickerbocker this week in an Ince film called "The Beckoning Flame." "The Missing Links," featuring Norma Talmadge and Robert Harlan, will be the Griffith contribution, and "A Submarine Pirate," with Syd Chaplin, will be given a return showing.

The Missing Links is a story of small town life, and the links in question are cut like figure as important clues in a murder mystery.

The Strand Theatre will have Fannie Ward in "The Cheat," written by Hector Turnbull. "The Cheat" was written for Miss Ward and Segue Hayakawa, a Japanese, who is said to give a forceful performance.

There will also be the topical review, a comedy, travel and scientific studies and inside stuff on the latest female fashions. The musical programme will include Martha De Lachmann, soprano, and Margaret Horton, contralto.

The feature at the Vitaphone Theatre will be "Thou Art the Man," written by George Cameron (Mrs. Sidney Elliott), will be seen not far from that theatre this week in "The Unknown," a filmed version of L. A. R. Wylie's novel, "The Red Mirage." It will be shown at the Broadway. "The Red Mirage" is a drama of the foreign legion of Algeria.

"Her Mother's Secret" is the title of the William Fox feature that will hold the screens of the Riverside Theatre and the Academy of Music for the first four days of the week. In the picture Ralph Kellard will make his first appearance in films, being starred with Dorothy Green. He will be seen in a dual characterization.

DESTINN AT HIPPODROME

Appears as Star of Sousa Concert To-Night.

Emmy Destinn, the second of the Hippodrome's list of visiting stars, will sing to-night as a headliner of the weekly Sousa programme. Miss Destinn has selected arias from Massenet's "Herodias" and Verdi's "Il Trovatore," with numbers from "Tosca" and "Madama Butterfly" as encores.

Heleen DeWitt Jacobs, violinist, will appear as soloist with the band. The Sousa programme will include selections from Thomas, Planquette, Strauss, Jersels, Delibes and, of course, Sousa.

At the Cort Theatre Victor Herbert will continue his concert series.

THEATRE FRANCAIS

"Mon Ami Teddy," with Yvonne Garri, To-morrow Evening.

"Mon Ami Teddy," which has had several long runs in Paris, will be given for the first time in America to-morrow evening at the Theatre Francais (Berkeley Lyceum). Yvonne Garri will portray the role of Madeline. "Son Homme," the war sketch, which was presented last week, will be continued, with Irene Bordoni and Edgar Beeman in the roles.

On Friday afternoon a performance of "Le Voyage M. Perrichon" will be given. "Denise," with Andree Mery in the title role, will be presented the week of December 20.

Strand Roof Garden.

Miss Elsie de Wolfe will present the fourth and last of the silver trophies to the best one-act team at the Strand Roof Garden next Wednesday evening. Sunday sessions, it is announced, will continue throughout the season.

Where and Why Plays of the Season Continue

"Major Barbara" Brings Shaw Back to New York and Gives the British Sage a Chance to Have His Say About Munitions Making.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

Play of Last Week.

"Major Barbara," at the Playhouse, brings Shaw to New York for the first time this season. It is good Shaw, too, though not at the top of his game. Shaw does so many things infinitely better than the ordinary run of playwrights that he may be pardoned for doing a few things worse.

"Major Barbara," for instance, is almost lacking in that dramatic quality called suspense, although it has plenty of rational and appealing. More than that, the play gives Grace George the best acting opportunity which she has had this season, and she plays to fine purpose. Conway Tearle is also excellent in a character part. We intend to write something about Louisa Calvert later, for he is an admirable actor and will undoubtedly do much better than on the first night, when he was not sure of some of his lines.

The play has perhaps an added interest in that it discusses the ethics of dealing in war munitions.

Comedies.

"The Unchastened Woman," at the Thirtieth Street Theatre, is a play with a punch. Miss Emily Stevens supplies the fist. Her performance is the best which any woman has given in New York this season. In fact, so good is her work that it may be the member even beyond the end of the season. Miss Stevens derives admirable support from Christine Norman in a contrasting role. The play, while undeniably artificial at times, is, all in all, the most effective telling of a story in terms of the theatre which New York has had this season.

"The Great Lover," at the Longacre, is a bustling, spirited comedy and sentimental story of the lives of the persons who make our most expensive talking machine records. All the buzz, and perhaps more, of opera house life is put on the stage. Dittichstein has fashioned a remarkable part for himself. It is tailor made. The things that Dittichstein the actor can do well have been provided by Dittichstein the author. Fortunately, there are a number of things that the actor-author can do very well indeed. His performance is masterly. The play itself is an exceedingly deft dramatization.

"The Boomerang," at the Belasco, is light comedy of a high order. Arthur Byron, Martha Hedman and Wallace Eddinger contribute much to the success of a play which has no unpleasant moments. Fortunately it has a neat satirical touch, which frees its sentiment from any hint of mushiness.

"Hobson's Choice," at the Comedy, is an example of the humor possible in a play of the naturalistic, realistic type. It is a play of the sort which looks like life as its inspiration. In a quiet and altogether orderly manner Brighouse has gone about telling the story of an elderly shoemaker and his three daughters. It is "Leah" transferred to Lancashire and translated to comedy. Whitford Kane and Molly Pearson are the leaders in a cast which is notable for its splendid balance. There is one rather broad scene, but it ought not to shock anybody unduly.

"Rolling Stones" at the Harris is a good-humored, entertaining play about two business adventurers who break into the candy business and make a success of it. It is mixed comedy and farce, and will make no great appeal to those who take their drama seriously. Charles Ruggles is seen to excellent advantage in the leading part.

"Abe and Mawruss" at the Lyric, is a clever continuation of the adventures of Potash and Perlmutter. Singularly enough, it is a much better play than the original story of the partners. The partnership is not as binding as in the past, since additional stress has been put upon Abe Potash. The prominence of Abe is due in a measure to the fine performance of Barney Bernard, but more particularly to the playwrights who have given him better opportunities than those accorded to Perlmutter. It is a delightful play, and not the least engaging thing about it is a pinocle game, during which one has only to watch Abe to note every misplay made by his wife Rose.

"The Chief," at the Empire, is close to the borderland of farce. It is a play of the lightest possible sort. What

substance it possesses is due to the excellent acting of John Drew, who appears to be in particularly good vein this season. His performance is a model of ease throughout and is almost good enough to make one forget what perfect "tooth" is his little play from England.

"Our Mrs. McChesney," at the Lyceum, is a dramatization of the stories of Edna Ferber. The play is a dramatic trifle, but it has much humor, and the voice of Ethel Barrymore is as appealing as ever. The humor of the play is a bit more vital than its sentiment. It is the sort of a play which will aggravate all critically minded persons mightily, but as it also seems to please in similar measure those who don't care much about how a play is put together there is nothing for the producers to worry about.

"Fair and Warmer" at the Eltinge is the best farce New York has seen in years. Avery Hopwood has shown himself a master craftsman in building this play. It is composed of familiar material, but nobody is likely to think

of that while the play is in progress. Indeed, it is probably true that the best farces are devised from ideas which are sufficiently well known to be easily accepted by an audience. The very essence of farce is an argument against making a vehicle of novelty. At any rate, "Fair and Warmer" can hardly fail to make the theatregoer laugh and keep on laughing. It is extremely well played.

"Lord Dundreary" at the Booth gives E. H. Sothern a chance to give a light performance in the part made famous by his father. The play, however, will serve to bring to their attention all those who prate about the good old days in the theatre.

"Hit-the-Trail Holliday" at the Astor is a play in which Billy Sunday is put in the hands of George Cohan. The play has the popular and familiar face of Cohan plays and provides several good acting parts.

"Sadie Love," at the Gaiety, is an attempt by Avery Hopwood to combine farce and romance. The play is admirably acted by Marjorie Rambeau, Pedro de Cordoba and others. It contains quite a little complexity and macabre, which is somewhat more heavy handed than in Hopwood's usual manner.

Melodramas.

"Treasure Island," at the Punch and Judy Theatre, is a play which has in its main caught the spirit of Stevenson's romance to a remarkable degree. It is played with great skill and spirit by excellent cast, in which Frank Spiller is particularly effective as Blind Pew. There are fights with cutlasses, with pistols and with rifles. Pirates and buried treasure abound. "Treasure Island" is good fun.

"Under Fire" routs the Germans in the last act, thanks to the courage of Captain Larry Redmond. Irish, of course. The play is not novel in its treatment of war, which is regarded in the conventionally romantic manner, but it is a neat bit of theatrical campy and calculated to thrill almost anybody. William Courtney supplies the heroism and Frank Craven puts in the humor.

"The House of Glass" at the Candler is a melodrama about the police and Mary Ryan. During the first two acts Mary Ryan gets all the worst of it, but she comes out triumphant at the end. The play is rather heavily emotional, but it furnishes an excellent company with plenty of opportunity to act.

"The Wate Case" at the Maxine Elliott Theatre is an exceedingly slow paced mystery play from England. Lot Tellegen has some fine moments in the third part, and rises to his feet in splendid manner, but for the greater part of the evening he is misast.

Problem Plays.

"The Eternal Magdalene" at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre insists that the scarlet woman is always with us and hence is entitled to a certain amount of consideration from society. The philosophy of the play is not profound nor is its dramatic treatment noteworthy. It is well acted on the whole and there are occasional scenes of power. One part, that of a newspaper reporter, is deserving of high praise both for McLaughlin, the author, and Sherman, the actor.

"Common Clay" at the Republic is not in the least profound and, certainly, not very novel, but it is a mannered and clever piece. Kindred has set the usual sort of sex problem in such a way as to attract the interest of his audiences. Much of his dialogue is excellent, and a good company headed by Jane Cowl and John Macdonald has a chance to act all over the stage. The play must be theatrically effective for it is one of the best hits of the season. We don't like it.

One-Act Plays.

The Washington Square Players, at the Handoff Theatre, which is on Forty-seventh Street, just off Third Avenue, present a bill of comparative comedies. The plays are "Literature," by Schnitzler; "Whims," by De Mause; "Overtones," by Alice Gerstenberg; and "The Unfortunate Lover," by Brainerd. The plays have a tendency to merge into one another through the fact that they are similar in theme and method. "Literature," however, wins individual recognition on account of its extreme cleverness, and "Overtones" is a somewhat novel dramatic experiment. The acting is fresh and for the most part skillful, and the four plays are mounted and staged in admirable manner. The Handoff deserves one visit and a worth more.

Musical Plays.

"Alone at Last," at the Shubert, is one of the finest scores which New York has heard in years. Lehara's splendid music is excellently sung. The book is far behind the music, though, well as funny, even though his opportunities are not great.

"The Princess Pat," at the Cort, is a tuneful musical comedy, by Victor Herbert. Eleanor Painter, in the leading role, is delightful in three dimensions, for she sings, acts and dances admirably. Sam Hardy carries off the comical honors.

"Hip-Hip-Hooray," at the Hippodrome, is a large scale and precise done up with less extensive shows. The skating of Charlotte and the music of Sousa's band are among the interesting features of an exceedingly bountiful show.

"Chin-Chin," at the Globe, is nearing the end of its run, although Montgomery and Stone are acting with an impaired spirit in this, their second year.

"Around the Map," at the New Amsterdam, gives Joseph Urban a chance to show his remarkable talents as a scene designer. The play is played with a slight, but decidedly clever book, pleasing score and admirable lyrics.

"The Blue Paradise," at the Casino is a tuneful musical. Cecil Lee and Cleo Mayfield attend to the comedy, and there are several tuneful songs as well as pleasing voices in singing them.

"The Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic" is a pleasant after the theatre entertainment, with Will Rogers and an extremely attractive chorus as the stars.



THAIS LAWTON IN "THE CHIEF"

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